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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 004125

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SUBJECT: DEPUTY PRESIDENT MADHI AND VICE PRESIDENT ADVISOR HANNAH DISCUSS AMENDMENTS TO UNSCR 1546, CURRENT VIOLENCE

Classified By: Deputy Political Counselor Robert Gilchrist for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Deputy President Adil abd al-Mahdi informed John Hannah, National Security Advisor to the Vice President, October 19 that Iraq is ready to take more risks in exchange for additional responsibilities in maintaining security and suggested adding amendments to UNSCR 1546 that would grant further sovereignty to the Iraqi Government. Mahdi believed such a step had Sadrists support and would encourage moderates to take a stand against extremism while sending a message of hope to the Iraqi people. At the same time, Mahdi insisted Baathists are perpetuating most of the violence and it is time to take a stand against them. END SUMMARY.

Madhi Presses For Additional UNSCR Amendments

¶2. (C) Deputy President Adil abd al-Mahdi informed John Hannah, National Security Advisor to the Vice President, October 19 that during a recent Policy Council on National Security (PCNS) meeting, all participants agreed amendments should be added to UNSCR 1546 that would grant more sovereignty to the GOI and act as a sign of goodwill toward the people of Iraq. Mahdi asserted that the GoI was willing to take more risks in exchange for additional responsibilities on security matters. He believed such a step had Sadrist support and would encourage moderates to take a stand against extremism while sending a message of hope to the Iraqi people.

¶3. (C) Mahdi insisted Iraq and the U.S. need a bilateral security agreement that would define the GoI's responsibilities and those of the U.S. Mahdi believed amending the UNSC resolution would be the best way to outline these responsibilities, but if amendments were not possible on such short notice, a separate bilateral agreement between

the U.S. and Iraq should be created. Mahdi alleged to Hannah that as far back as February 2004, Secretary Rumsfeld had agreed that such a bilateral accord between the U.S. and Iraq could and should be quickly worked out. Mahdi complained that even Saddam under sanctions had more authority over Iraq than the current government. The Prime Minister cannot move fifty of his own soldiers without MNF-I approval and U.S. forces have the authority to arrest and detain Iraqis and control borders, yet the USG tells the GoI that it must take control. Iraqis may stumble, he admitted, but they would get right back up. (NOTE: The inability to control troop movements was a reoccurring theme in Hannah's meetings, probably spurred by recent events in Balad. Abdul Aziz al-Hakim complained to Hannah on October 17, that the Prime Minister recently gave orders for troops to move to Balad in response to growing violence, but MNF-I reportedly denied the movement. END NOTE.)

¶4. (C) Hannah inquired about the Sadrists stance on extending the MNF-I mandate. Mahdi insisted that during a recent PCNS meeting he

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asked the Sadrists directly if they would fight an extension of the resolution; they assured Mahdi that they would not, but they would prefer amendments that would grant the GoI more independence.

Mahdi blames Violence on the Baathists, AQI

¶5. (C) Hannah noted the problems caused by Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) in marah (Maysan Governorate), but Mahdi insisted that Iraqi forces now have the city under control. He claimed that it is the Baathists, not the JAM, who are causing the most violence and aiding al-Qaida (AQI). Without Baathist support, he insisted, AQI would not exist as a meaningful force. Mahdi noted that the USG is negotiating with Baathists and insisted the only U.S. interaction should be to negotiate the Baathists' surrender. When Hannah wondered if there may be some moderate Baathist elements that would be responsive to negotiation, Mahdi dismissed their interest in reconciliation, noting the Baath's violent and destructive history, beginning with the assassination of 'Abd al-Karim al-Qasim and continuing on through Saddam's messages of hate and violence he is broadcasting through his live trials.

¶6. (C) Mahdi noted that the door to participating in the Iraqi government must be open to everyone. The one condition they

ask of
Sunni leaders is that they fight the terrorists coming from
their
territories. The GoI wants to work with the Sunnis, Madhi
insisted, but
the Sunnis must be willing to fight terrorism. There can be
no
acceptance of a "legitimate" armed resistance against Iraq's
democracy.
Once Sunni leaders show they can be effective in this regard,
they will
earn more local authority in Sunni areas and political
authority in
Baghdad. Sunnis say they are trying, Madhi noted, but how can
they be
trying when they allow themselves to be surrounded by
Baathists? He
described a recent message he received from a phone number
used by
Adnan Al Dulaymi that said, "we will kill you." Al-Dulaymi
denied all
knowledge of the message, but Mahdi insisted it must have
been someone
in his office. Madhi also referenced a copy of a recent
assassination
list circulated by the Baath Party. Abdul Aziz al-Hakim was
first on
the list; Mahdi was number thirty. The list threatened not
only to
execute the listed individuals, but also their relatives to
the third
degree.

Abdul Aziz al-Hakim's Upcoming Trip to US

¶17. (C) Mahdi asked Hannah about his earlier meeting with Hadi
al-Amiri,
leader of the Badr Organization. Hannah said he had been
impressed by
Amiri's comprehensive assessment of Iraq's political,
economic, and
security challenges, as well as by his prescriptions -
including
the imperative of disarming militias and fighting all those
who
continue to carry arms outside the authority of the state.
Hannah noted

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that Amiri had said all the right things, but given his
background it
was hard to judge his actual degree of commitment. Madhi
probed for
Hannah's opinion on whether Amiri - given his prominent role
in Iraq
and his ability to help address Iraq's challenges - should
accompany
Abdul Aziz al-Hakim on his upcoming trip to the U.S. Hannah
raised the
concern that the presence of someone so identified with an
Iranian-
backed militia might distract from the important central
purpose of Al-
Hakim's trip of building new confidence and understanding
between the
United States and the leader of Iraq's most important Shi'a
coalition.

¶18. (U) This cable was cleared by OVPNSA John Hannah.
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